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Explosive ordnance disposal

Initial success or total failure

Death stalker scorpion stings

Team effort saves NCO

PLUS: TSP



Letter to Airmen



Holiday safety



JET 48 Vol. 46 No. 49
Friday, Dec. 15, 2006

**"Anywhere, Anytime ...
Whatever needs done."**

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AT A GLANCE



Photo by 1st Lt. Aaron Henninger

Children give a tug at Santa's beard to ensure he is the genuine article. Volunteers from the 48th Munitions Squadron and 48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron teamed up with the Imperial War Museum Duxford to provide a Christmas party for local children Tuesday.

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Last DUI:

☐ 6:10 a.m., Dec. 9

Squadron:

☐ 48th Communication Squadron

**ARRIVE ALIVE...
DON'T DRINK
AND DRIVE!**



AADD

AADD Hours: 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and Sundays on three-day weekends. Call 226-4800 or (0800) 280 178.

DUI condition: Green

Courtesy of the 48th Fighter Wing Safety Office

ON THE COVER:

Senior Airman Kristopher Parker helps Airman 1st Class Juan Ortiz into the Explosive Ordinance Disposal 8 bomb suit. EOD troops are required to put on the EOD8 suit in two minutes or less with the help of two Airmen.
(Photo by Senior Airman Eric Donner)

Deck the halls...safely

BY BRIG. GEN. ROBERT P. STEEL

48TH FIGHTER WING COMMANDER

The operational readiness exercise last week gave us an opportunity to really focus on the importance of safety in our operational tasks. From simple things like wearing your reflective belt during non-daylight hours to big things like explicitly following tech orders to ensure our jets launch safely, I'm proud of the level of effort and attention to detail our Liberty Warriors put into executing our ORE in a safe, effective manner.

However, I'd feel remiss if I didn't also emphasize the importance of safety on the home front during the winter months. The same level of safety focus you each put into the ORE last week should also be put into the safety of your homes, your family and your friends.

Simple things, like slowing down when driving in adverse weather and blowing out candles when leaving a room unattended, can save your family from experiencing a holiday catastrophe. Vehicle accidents double during the winter months due to ice and poor visibility. House fires increase during the months of November and December, primarily due to holiday cooking and baking left unattended and improperly decking your halls with holiday decorations.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, each year holiday fires injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. If those statistics don't inspire you to water your holiday tree regularly and check electrical outputs for proper voltage, I can assure you that walking through the charred, smoking home of a family, now homeless during the holidays, will. To avoid this, our assistant RAF Lakenheath fire chief shared with us in last week's Jet 48 some simple, life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday and greatly reduce your chance of becoming a holiday fire casualty. I'd like to reiterate them:

- Care for your holiday tree by not placing it near a fireplace or heat vent and keep the stand filled with water at all times. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly by taking it to a recycling center.
- Inspect holiday lights for frayed wires and broken sockets before putting

ting them up. Do not overload electrical outlets, and ensure the correct voltage is used with U.K. and U.S. lights. Also, do not leave holiday lights on, unattended...not only is it safer to turn your lights off at night, but it saves electricity.

- Use non-flammable decorations, including flame-retardant artificial trees, and place them away from heat vents. If you light candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

- Test smoke alarms in your home monthly, and keep fresh batteries in them at all times. Working smoke alarms are vital for early detection of smoke and fire. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

In addition to fire safety, I must emphasize the importance of careful driving on the local roads. Just last week we had a near-fatal motorcycle accident of one of our active duty members, who, although wearing the proper gear, still couldn't slow down in time to avoid a terrible accident.

From fog, ice and snow to darkness, small roads and weariness behind the wheel...every single one of these factors can cause an accident on their own. Combine a few together and disaster inevitably strikes. Do everything you can to set yourself up safely before driving.

- Clear windows of condensation, ice and snow; check weather forecasts and adjust your travel plans accordingly; have your car winterized and ensure tires are suitable for poor weather traction; most importantly

- SLOW DOWN. This, above anything else, will alleviate the consequences of an accident, should one occur.

Notice I didn't mention alcohol and drinking and driving. As everyone knows, getting behind the wheel after even one drink is unacceptable in the U.S. Air Force and puts most people over the legal limit in the U.K. Don't do it. Enough said.

Although safety isn't always an exciting or enjoyable topic to discuss with your family and friends, it's an important one. So important, it can save your life and the lives of those you love. What better gift can you give this holiday season than taking care of one another?

USAFE leaders send holiday message

The following is a joint message from Gen. Tom Hobbins, U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Gary G. Coleman, USAFE command chief master sergeant.

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (USAFENS) — Chief Coleman and I have probably seen more Christmas holidays come and go while we've been in the Air Force than many of our young Airmen have been around. We're happy to report it hasn't diminished the joy we feel of sharing another holiday season with all of you. But this time grows more special as we continue the war on terror.

This is an appropriate time to reflect on our past year's accomplishments as well as look ahead with renewed optimism. We both share a deep pride and admiration of your tremendous accomplishments: supporting the transport of Americans during the Lebanon crisis, building relationships in Eastern Europe and Africa, continuing our vital role in

Afghanistan and Iraq, and protecting the Riga Summit. Because of you, many can look forward to the prospect of a safer and brighter future.

As we look ahead, we know we'll face another challenging year. We know you have what it takes to accomplish whatever unknown challenges and missions may lie ahead. You routinely make the extremely difficult seem easy, and that's what makes our USAFE team so great, and Chief Coleman and I are proud to serve with you.

Please remember our servicemembers who are deployed this holiday season. They, and their families, deserve our thoughts and prayers. For those here on the home front, please stay safe, cherish your loved ones and embrace those who are here alone.

Our time together in USAFE is special. Holidays seem to highlight that togetherness. We are glad for the opportunity to be a part of it with you.

Have a great holiday. You deserve it!

ACTION LINE



The Action Line is your direct link to me for complaints, suggestions or comments. It's not intended to replace the chain of command. When normal command agency channels haven't been able to resolve your concerns, call 226-2324, fax 226-5637, e-mail (Action.Line@lakenheath.af.mil), send through distribution (48 FW/PA), mail (48FW/PA, Unit 5210 Box 215 APO AE 09461-0215) or hand carry your Action Line to the public affairs office (Building 1085). You may remain anonymous; however, to receive a reply, please leave your name, unit, duty or home phone number and full APO mailing address. Names are confidential.



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



DEC 04 2006

BE SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season gives many of us the well-deserved opportunity to relax and celebrate with friends and family. But for some the holidays can be stressful, especially when heightened by separation from loved ones. This time of year includes unique opportunities for activities and emotions that we should be both grateful for and wary of. We're asking you once again to keep a close eye on your Wingmen – your friends, loved ones and fellow Airmen – this holiday season, thus continuing to play an important role in preserving the Air Force's most precious resource – you.


Although we already put a lot of emphasis on safety, we can all do more to look out for our Wingmen. Eight of our precious Airmen have committed suicide this fiscal year. Many of these heartbreaking tragedies could have been avoided if Wingmen had intervened.

In FY06 we lost 45 Airmen to private motor vehicle mishaps and countless others were injured. Most of these could have been avoided with proper risk management decisions. During this season, in particular, many off-duty activities carry significant inherent risk that can easily be compounded by exceeding individual capabilities, drinking alcohol, failing to follow proper procedures or wear the proper gear, and failing to plan for winter travel.

It takes leadership – both from individuals and the chain of command – to prevent needless losses. Leaders at all levels must focus attention on sound individual decision making, a disciplined approach to risk management, and the importance of *Educating, Motivating, and Activating*. *Educating* means building the knowledge, skills, and character to behave safely and decrease risk exposure. *Motivating* means giving fellow Airmen the incentive to make the right decisions. *Activating* means providing the tools to act safely and ensuring each Airman understands the importance of making the right choice.

Ultimately, we can all make a difference, both for the friends and families of our Airmen and for the nation as a whole. Each life we save and each mishap we prevent translates directly into preserving combat capability for our nation. We are at war and need every Airman combat ready and in the fight.

We are grateful for the friends and family who understand and support your sacrifices, and wish them warmth and comfort this season under the blanket of security you provide. And we're grateful for Airmen who demonstrate that the defense of freedom is an unyielding endeavor and live by ideals that never take a holiday. Today, nearly 700,000 total force Airmen are answering the call to serve as part of the Joint Team, defending our nation here at home or deployed a world away. Wherever your service takes you this holiday season, be safe, proud and certain that all Americans value and appreciate you. We remain amazed by what you do every day for our great nation. You have our heartfelt thanks.


Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force


T. Michael Moseley
General, USAF
Chief of Staff



Liberty SFS blotter

The 48th Security Forces Squadron handled the following incidents from Dec. 6 to Monday:

Dec. 6: An NCO reported property stolen from her vehicle in Anglo Housing

Dec. 7: An Airman and a civilian were involved in a minor vehicle accident at the intersection of Lords Walk and Norwich Rd.

Dec. 7: A civilian was involved in a major vehicle accident on the A1101

Dec. 7: An NCO and an Airman were involved in a minor vehicle accident on Lincoln Rd. and Douglas Rd.

Dec. 8: A civilian was detained for shoplifting at the base exchange

Dec. 8: An Airman and a civilian were involved in a major vehicle accident at the intersection of Lords Walk and Radcliffe Rd.

Dec. 9: An Airman was apprehended for driving under the influence of alcohol on base

Dec. 11: An Airman was suspected of involvement in a gas drive off at the shoppette

If you have any information concerning any incident, call the security forces control center at 226-2333, (01638) 522 333 or 226-4800, or call your first sergeant. For an emergency on base call 911, and for an emergency off base call 999.

Safety tips for the holidays

The rush and the good will surrounding the holidays can increase the opportunities for criminal activities. Security Forces suggests these simple tips to assist you in a safe and happy holiday season.

Attending a party

- ❖ If you are going to consume alcoholic beverages, plan to have a designated driver or use public transportation.

Driving

- ❖ Be cautious while driving alone at night.
- ❖ Keep all doors locked and windows closed while in or out of your vehicle.
- ❖ Never park next to large vehicles or vehicles with heavy tinted windows.
- ❖ Park in well lighted areas.
- ❖ Never leave a vehicle unattended with children inside or while running.
- ❖ Do not leave gifts or other valuables in plain sight in your vehicle; it is an unnecessary temptation for thieves.
- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings when approaching or leaving your vehicle.
- ❖ If security is available, ask for an escort to your vehicle if leaving at night and alone.

Shopping

- ❖ Minimize shopping at night or alone; you are more susceptible to being victimized at night or alone.
- ❖ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash and credit cards. Take only the cash needed or pay with a credit card or ATM card.
- ❖ If you use an ATM, use one inside of a well-populated building or a well light area. Only withdraw the amount of cash needed the day. Protect the personal identification number

from the view of others.

- ❖ Keep a record of all your credit card numbers at home in a safe location; report lost or stolen credit cards immediately.
- ❖ Be careful when carrying a wallet or purse; carry only what is needed. Wallets and purses are prime targets for criminals in crowded shopping areas.
- ❖ Avoid overloading yourself and your vehicle with packages.

At home

- ❖ Criminals may pose as couriers delivering gifts to a home to commit a crime.
- ❖ Be aware of scams; criminals take advantage of generosity during the holidays.
- ❖ Be cautious; lock windows and doors when you leave the house.
- ❖ If you leave home for an extended time, have a neighbor or friend watch your home while away, and collect your mail and newspapers.
- ❖ Place lights, radios and televisions on timers so your home appears occupied.
- ❖ Avoid large displays of gifts visible from windows and doors.

Children

- ❖ If possible, leave small children at home when going shopping.
- ❖ If children must go shopping with you, try to keep them close to you at all times.
- ❖ Teach children about "stranger danger" and who they can go to for help if they get separated from you. Children should know their full name, address, telephone number and parents' or guardians' full names to give to police, a store clerk or security if they get separated from you.

Air Force member remembered

Maj. Troy Lee Gilbert, U.S. Air Force, age 34, was killed in action while flying a combat mission in Anbar Province, Iraq, on Nov. 27, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was born Feb. 19, 1972, to Ronnie and Kaye Gilbert at Barksdale Air Force Base, La. Major Gilbert was deployed to Balad Air Base, Iraq, assigned to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing in U.S. Central Command Air Forces. He deployed to Iraq from the 309th Fighter Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., where he was Assistant Director of Operations.

Major Gilbert was a career military officer with 13 years of service in the U.S. Air Force. Upon completion of the U.S. Air Force Officer Training School at Maxwell AFB, Ala., he served at RAF Lakenheath, England; conducted pilot training at Sheppard AFB, Texas; and was assigned to the 555th Fighter Squadron at Aviano AB,

Italy, before becoming an instructor pilot with the 62nd Fighter Squadron at Luke AFB, Ariz. His career included 130 combat flying hours in F-16 aircraft and has been posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.

Survivors include his wife, Ginger, two sons, and three daughters currently residing in Litchfield Park, Ariz. He is also survived by his parents, Ron and Kaye Gilbert, of Wichita Falls, Texas; and a sister, Rhonda Jimmerson and her husband, both of Arlington, Texas.

Major Gilbert was interred at Arlington National Cemetery Tuesday. Memorial donations and gifts are being submitted to the Fighter Country Partnership in Goodyear, Ariz.

Editors note: Information courtesy 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

Thrift investment board ups '07 TSP contribution limits

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board has announced a \$500 increase in regular Thrift Savings Plan contributions to \$15,500 for 2007 elective deferral maximum contributions.

“TSP is a long-term retirement savings plan, which everyone should consider,” said Janet Thomas, a human resources specialist at the Air Force Personnel Center here. “It’s a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans.”

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute, and taxes are deferred until the employee withdraws the account after retirement.

“Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck so you never have to think about it. That makes it easy to ‘pay yourself first’ while only investing what you deem appropriate,” said Ms. Thomas.

Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions, separate from regular TSP contributions. For those who are eligible, catch-up contributions provide a way for individuals to secure their retirement if they began investing late in life.

To be eligible for catch-up contributions, civilian and military employees must be age 50 or older in the year in which the first deduction from pay occurs, be in a pay status and must be able to certify they will make (or have made) the maximum “regular” employee contributions of \$15,500 to a TSP or other eligible account by the end of 2007.

The “other” type of eligible account could be a uniformed services TSP account or another eligible employer plan, such as a 401(k). Employees must also not be in the six-month non-contribution period following a financial hardship in-service withdrawal.

Catch-up contributions automatically stop with the last pay date in the calendar year or upon reaching the maximum catch-up dollar limit for the year, whichever comes first. Eligible employees must submit a new election for each year they wish to participate.

Regular TSP contributions stop when an employee’s contributions reach the annual maximum limit and then automatically resume the next calendar year.

Investing in TSP is not limited to stocks. People can choose safer government securities or invest in the Lifecycle Funds. Some specifics of the program include:

Military

— Airmen may contribute any whole percentage of basic pay, as long as the annual total of tax-deferred investment doesn’t exceed \$15,500 for 2007. May also invest all or part of bonuses, special pay or incentive pay, as long as the member contributes from basic pay. Members may enroll in December; however, requested actions will not update until Jan. 1.

— Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$45,000 in annual contributions for 2007. The \$45,000 total includes the tax-exempt combat zone contributions and the regular deferred contributions.

— Military members can enroll or change their regular TSP contribution amount through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> or by filling out a form TSP-U-1 Election Form at local military personnel flights and finance offices.

— Eligible members can enroll to make catch-up contributions at local military personnel flights and finance offices by filling out a Form TSP-U-1-C, TSP Catch-Up Contribution Election.

— Contribution allocations (how an employee chooses to invest money among the investment funds) can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine (877) 968-3778 for employees in the United States, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and Canada; employees elsewhere should call (404)233-4400 or logging

onto the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov> via their Account Access.

— For general TSP questions, call the Air Force Personnel Center at (800) 616-3775 (press 1, press 1, press 1, and follow the prompts).

— Additional information about TSP, both regular and catch-up, is available on the TSP Web site. The TSP booklet “Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan” is also a good source of information. It is located on the TSP Web site under uniformed services TSP Forms and Publications.

Civilian

— Civilians may contribute any whole percentage of their basic pay or a whole dollar amount each pay period to a regular TSP account, subject to the \$15,500 annual maximum for 2007. If a whole dollar amount is designated and the amount exceeds remaining salary after mandatory and other voluntary deductions that occur ahead of TSP contributions, no TSP contributions will be made. In addition, if covered by the Federal Employees’ Retirement System, no agency matching contributions will be received. Should this happen, an employee will need to make a new election and elect either a lower dollar amount or a percentage. No TSP contributions will be withheld from pay until the new election is effective.

— Air Force-serviced civilians may submit regular TSP enrollment elections or changes at any time. Contributions will automatically continue into 2007 for those already in TSP; so, it is not necessary to submit an election unless you wish to change the amount of your bi-weekly contributions. The contribution on pay date Jan. 12, 2007 will apply towards the 2007 annual maximum.

— Regular TSP enrollments or changes, or catch-up contribution enrollments submitted between Dec. 10-23 will be effective Dec. 24 and reflect on pay date Jan. 12, 2007; elections submitted between Dec. 24 and Jan. 6 will be effective Jan. 7 and reflect on the Jan. 26 pay date.

— When submitting a catch-up contribution election, employees need to designate a whole-dollar amount to contribute each payday rather than the annual maximum of \$5,000. Do not designate an amount that exceeds net pay or payroll will not withhold any TSP contributions. To spread catch-up contributions evenly over the year, divide the total contribution (up to \$5,000) by the number of pay dates remaining in the year. There are 26 pay dates in 2007 for employees who submit their catch-up contribution election between Dec. 10-23.

— Air Force-serviced civilians will enroll or submit regular TSP contribution elections, as well as catch-up contribution elections if eligible, via the Employee Benefits Information System Web application or the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team phone system. EBIS is available on the AFPC Web site at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecure/default.asp> or through the Air Force Portal at <http://www.my.af.mil>.

— Employees may reach the BEST phone system by dialing toll-free (800) 616-3775. Overseas employees need to dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country they are in, then (800) 616-3775. When the phone system answers, press “2” for Air Force-serviced civilians, then “2” again for BEST benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts. AT&T direct access numbers can be found at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp.

— Additional information about TSP, both regular and catch-up, is available on the TSP Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov> and the BEST homepage at <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/best/default.asp?prods3=272&prods2=264&prods1=44> (under Thrift Savings Plan). The TSP booklet “Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan” is also a good source of information. It is located on the TSP Web site under civilian or uniformed services TSP Forms and Publications.

Team effort saves NCO

BY TECH. SGT. GENE LAPPE

506TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY GROUP PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq-From asleep to awake in seconds ... a pair of sharp stings from a scorpion known as the “death stalker” jolted a member of the 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron awake in the early morning hours of Nov. 18.

Staff Sgt. Monique Munro-Harris, 506th EMEDS biomedical equipment technician deployed from RAF Lakenheath, was asleep when she felt something on her ear, and when she brushed it away, she was stung for the first time on the ring finger of her left hand.

The object landed on her side and stung her again. This sting woke her right up, and she started looking for the source of the pain.

“At first I thought it was a camel spider,” said Sergeant Munro-Harris. “I got undressed, checked my clothes and looked through my sheets trying to find what had bitten or stung me.”

Initially, she didn’t see anything, but as she was getting dressed she saw the culprit – a small scorpion, already dead. She showed it to her roommate, and the two agreed that Sergeant Munro-Harris needed to go to the emergency room.

She had the foresight to take the scorpion with her to the ER, which may ultimately have saved her life.

She said she felt fine when she got the E.R. Capt. (Dr.) Amy Gammill, 506th EMEDS internal medicine physician also deployed from the 48th Medical Group at RAF Lakenheath, examined her.

“When she first came in, she didn’t have any symptoms except for a little redness and swelling on her finger,” said Captain Gammill. “We sat her down, put ice on the sting sites and started working her history. The (wounds) looked like and felt like bee stings.”

The ER staff also began actively monitoring her vital signs. After Captain Gammill started initial treatment to limit the effects of the toxin, she did some research and contacted Maj. Juan Leon, Public Health officer in charge another 48th MDG deployed member, for help with identifying the type of scorpion.

When he arrived at the ER, he immediately knew what it was: *Lieurus quinquestratus*, the “death stalker.”

“We knew at that point that we needed to be very aggressive with our treatment,” said Captain Gammill. She contacted the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad Air Base to ensure antivenin was available if necessary and to find out if the staff had any experience with such cases. She also called Col. (Dr.) Pat Storms, 506th EMEDS deputy commander deployed from RAF Lakenheath, to discuss treatment options.

According to most data about stings by this type of scorpion, 97 percent of the victims have only a local reaction, and only 3 percent have severe reactions, Captain Gammill said. Based on these odds, the 506th staff decided to treat Sergeant Munro-Harris on site rather than transfer her to Balad.

Initially, the patient was fine. Then, about two-and-a-half hours after being stung, her condition started to deteriorate. In a matter of minutes, she felt as if she were having trouble breathing. She felt pressure in her chest and became visibly anxious. She may have been experiencing what Captain Gammill called “a systemic reaction to the sting” since the symptoms were appearing so rapidly.

A systemic reaction can involve the entire body, with symptoms ranging from red, warm skin and itching to swelling and tightness in the throat, chest, lips, or tongue, an abnormal heartbeat, a drop in blood pressure and shock that can lead to death.

After consultation with Colonel Storms, the staff made the decision to insert a breathing tube into the patient’s windpipe – a process known as intubation – and transfer her to Balad to receive the antivenin.

“The last thing you want to do is deal with an airway problem in flight,” said Colonel Storms. “It is challenging to work on a patient because there isn’t enough room to work around them to insert a tube. We discussed this with the internist and the anesthesiologist and elected to do the procedure before we transported her.”

A flight surgeon, Colonel Storms accompanied Sergeant Munro-Harris on the flight. The intubation had gone smoothly, and she did well for most of the trip to Balad, the colonel said.

“Then, 15 minutes before we landed, everything bad happened at once,” he said. “She lost her blood pressure and pulse. She was also started having abnormal cardiac rhythms.” These symptoms were brought on as a result of the venom coursing through her system.

Colonel Storms started administering medications to try to stabilize her. His efforts were successful, and her blood pressure and pulse returned. She continued to improve through

the remainder of the flight.

By the time the helicopter landed at Balad, she had a steady pulse and good blood pressure.

She was rushed into the ER and given the antivenin. Once it started to counter the effects of the toxins, her condition improved rapidly and airway support was discontinued. She was later transferred to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany.

Four days later, her condition had improved so much that she was released from the hospital. She will remain in the area for a few days and have her heart checked regularly to ensure she has no lingering effects from the toxin.

“Sergeant Munro-Harris benefited from some pretty terrific teamwork,” said Colonel Storms. “The ER-crew did a fantastic job getting her squared away and ready to transport. The anesthesiologist did a brilliant intubation. The Army medical evacuation personnel were fantastic, and the receiving team at Balad Air Base knew exactly what to do,” he said. “A large group of people working as a team ... you can’t get any better than that.”

“From asleep to awake in seconds ... a pair of sharp stings from a scorpion known as the “death stalker” jolted [her] awake in the early morning hours of Nov. 18.”

Explosive Ordnance Disposal

INITIAL SUCCESS OR TOTAL FAILURE

STORY AND PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS KRIS LEVASSEUR
48TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Imagine seeing a suspicious looking package on RAF Lakenheath. No one knows who it belongs to or how it got there. The 48th Civil Engineer Squadron's Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight is the first to be called in to investigate.

The mission of RAF Lakenheath's EOD flight is to provide improvised explosive device and aircraft support, train for deployments and investigate suspicious packages.

EOD supports calls to the flight line to deal with miss-fired weapons. EOD technicians are trained to remove and disarm hazardous materials or munitions.

They are also prepared to respond to an unexploded ordnance, or munition, also called UXO's. However, in most instances the Ministry of Defense handles UXOs found in the local area.

As the bulk of their mission takes place downrange, EOD members train extensively for deployment scenarios, such as roadside bombs and improvised explosive device's. Occasionally, they return to the U. S. for additional training courses.

"To train for deployments, we set up replica scenarios from reports we have received of actual incidents that have occurred in the area of responsibility," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Cummings, 48th EOD operations.

"We also try to run a couple worst-case scenario operations so we can develop a plan in case the worst were to arise," he added.

The job downrange is extremely hazardous, as EOD members put their

lives on the line everyday to get the job done.

"On any given day, your vehicle could be hit by an IED, or someone could take pot shots at you as you drive by. I think the thing that really helps us deal with the stress from day to day is that we have such a tight family atmosphere between EOD technicians around the world, no matter what branch of service," said Sergeant Cummings.

Unlike most Airmen, EOD technicians do not deploy on a regular air expeditionary force cycle. They deploy in cycles identified as red, white and blue. These six-month cycles, set up solely for EOD, allow each member to spend a year at home before their next deployment. At this current time, approximately 65 percent of RAF Lakenheath's EOD flight is deployed, with 22 of the 32 Airmen downrange.

Due to frequent deployments, there is very little direct supervision, affording junior enlisted and even NCOs the opportunity to hold higher leadership positions, Tech. Sgt. Charles Price, 48th EOD acting flight chief.

"It takes the kind of person who doesn't need to be told to do things and can make decisions on their own," said Sergeant Price. "I couldn't see doing anything else."

Technicians attend a seven month joint-service technical school at the Navy School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. On average there is a 30 percent washout rate per class. This average can increase to 85 percent if students are unable to obtain security clearance.

At home or downrange, EOD technicians protect fellow servicemembers and families by disempowering and disarming terrorists' most used weapon—the IED.



Airman 1st class William Nuckles, 48th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician conducts training with a MK3 RONS robot, Dec. 8. To become proficient on the robot, Airmen must train a minimum of 25 hours.



Photo by Senior Airman Eric Donner

Perfect game

Dennis Patton warms up for the Monday night Youth Adult League Dec. 4. Dennis, 15, became the youngest person to bowl a 300, a perfect game in bowling, at Liberty Lanes, here. Dennis is in the Youth Adult League with his father, Chad Patton. They are currently ranked seventh, the bowling season is 32 week long.

Holiday drinking; surviving past the New Year

BY STAFF SGT. MARC A GRAMATGES

48TH MEDICAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

With the holiday season already upon us, many thoughts come to mind: family, gifts, traveling, parties, bills, etc. However, one thought that should be considered carefully is drinking. During the holidays drinking is only more prevalent, but alcohol related incidents also increase. To avoid ruining the holidays with a bad hangover, rowdy guests, a DUI or even a death, below is some advice to follow to avoid those holiday ARIs:

When throwing a party

Have food. This sounds more obvious than it really is. When throwing a party, realize eggnog is not a meal unto itself. Have plenty of appetizers available and things to munch on before and after the main meal. The food gives guest more options than just drinking.

Collect keys. If you have guests coming over, make sure they have a designated driver. If they plan on drinking and taking a taxi or staying the night, make sure to get the car keys. Remember, while they might be keen on not driving when they first arrive, after a few drinks they might not make the best decisions. That is when they drive drunk.

Offer alternatives. If all you have to drink at your party is alcohol, then chances are your guests will drink it. Have plenty of nonalcoholic drinks available, whether it is soda, juice, tea or even water.

When going to a party

Have a plan. This does not go only for the holidays, but it is worth repeating. If you plan on drinking, plan on not driving. A good rule to follow is having a trifold plan: primary, secondary and fail-safe. The primary could be having a DD. When the DD picks up a bottle, go secondary with a taxi. If the taxi doesn't come, plan on enjoying a nice, soft, failsafe couch or call Airman Against Drunk Driving. Whether it is sleeping at a friend's

place or getting a taxi, make sure you have a place to stay and a way to get there.

Pace yourself. For many of us, drinking is not an every weekend event, or monthly for that matter. However, when the holidays come around it is a time to celebrate and many partake in alcoholic beverages. The problem is many people who drink only during the holidays are not used to alcohol and the effects can be more potent. So, when drinking at a party, take it slow and pace yourself, not like the person throwing back shots sitting next to you.

Say no to invites. If you get invited to five parties in one night, it doesn't mean you have to go to all five and then the pub. Go to the one you most want to go to. If you start driving from party to party, chances are you might have more drinks in your system, increasing the odds for an ARI. It also increases your time on the road, which increases the chances of someone else who is drinking to crash into you, even when you are completely sober.

General advice

Take it easy. If you start getting stressed out during the holidays, take a step back and relax. Maybe not going to a party or two or not having festivities at your place could reduce a great deal of stress. When you start drinking to deal with it all, none of your goals will get done, causing more stress, drinking and so on. So take a deep breath, prioritize, and take it easy.

Know referral agencies. If the holiday blues are encouraging you to drink, there are plenty of other options. Call your chaplains, Life Skills, ADAPT, Family Support, supervisor, commander, friends or family. If you feel the need to drink to deal with it, all you have to do is put down the bottle and pick up the phone.

Remember what it is all about. The holidays are different for everyone. For some it is religious, others its about family, and to some it is just about having a good time. Remember to enjoy the holidays and if you plan on drinking, plan on being safe.

What happened?

CHIEF MASTER SGT. JOHN W. MILLER

48TH COMPONENT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

A few months ago I was fortunate enough to serve as a chief mentor for Airman Leadership School Class 06E. This program allows chiefs to spend time at the ALS mentoring, teaching, listening and learning. I went to the school several times a week during the course and spent many hours interacting with the students. The ALS course is a non-attribution environment, where students are encouraged to speak freely to aid in the learning process. Throughout the course I listened as many students talked about their supervisors. Most talked favorably, while some did not. Some of the things I heard greatly disturbed me.

During ALS, students study counseling techniques, performance feedback, performance reports and many other areas. They must successfully complete written and performance based evaluations. When they graduate they have demonstrated the knowledge and capability to be supervisors. After listening to many examples of poor supervision, I posed a question to the class "What happened?"

What happened to those supervisors? Didn't they attend ALS only a few years ago? I know they were taught how to be good supervisors. I saw the curriculum. I know you must pass the evaluations to graduate. This tells me they knew the material. When they

left ALS they were charged up and ready for anything. Now only a couple of years later, those graduates are not living up to the standard. What happened?

Is it that easy to forget? Are we, as leaders, letting them forget? I was stunned to hear many supervisors tell the students upon return to their work centers to forget everything they learned in ALS because "we don't do it that way here." If you are telling your Airmen to forget everything they learned, stop it. Each level of professional military education that we attend teaches the right way, the way it should be done at every location throughout the Air Force.

What about those of you who have attended the NCO academy or Senior NCO academy? Are you using the tools you were given to fulfill your obligation? Have you forgotten what you were taught? Are your Airmen using you as a bad example in an ALS discussion? If so, what happened?

If you are an NCO, it's time to step up, time to be a leader, time to set the example and fulfill your NCO responsibilities. Don't tell your Airmen to forget what they have learned. Show them how to apply it to real situations. Show them how to change "the way we do it here" to the way it should be everywhere: the right way. Or, will your subordinates sit in the next ALS class giving examples of your poor supervisory skills and poor leadership? And will we be asking "what happened?"

New homes open up



Photo by Airman John Easterling

Brig. Gen. Robert P. Steel, 48th Fighter Wing commander, Steve Waite, Mansell managing director, Mr. Phillip Morton, Defence Estates divisional director and Col. Mike Stough, 100th Air Refuelling Wing commander, cut the ribbon on the first home in the newly-renovated Liberty Village ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday. The ceremony marked the the turn over of the first phase of what will be an overall total of 606 new, energy efficient homes.



Discover Britain

By Sal Davidson - Community Relations Adviser



Hogmanay

New Year's Eve is celebrated around the world out, the Scots have a long rich heritage associated with this event - and have their own name for it, Hogmanay.

Historians believe the Scots inherited the celebration from the Vikings who, coming from even further north than Scotland, paid more attention to the passing of the shortest day. In Shetland, where the Viking influence was strongest, New Year was called Yules from the Scandinavian word, and in Scotland the name for New Years Day was Ne'er Day.

Many Scots had to work over Christmas and their winter solstice holiday was therefore at New Year when family and friends gathered for a party and exchanged presents, especially for the children, which came to be called Hogmanays.

There are traditions before midnight such as cleaning the house on Dec. 31 and taking out the ashes from the fire in the days when coal fires were common. There is also the superstition to clear all your debts before "the bells" at midnight.

Immediately after midnight it is traditional to sing Robert Burns' "For Auld Lang Syne. Burns claimed it was based on an earlier fragment and certainly." the tune was in print over 80 years before he published his version in 1788.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot and auld lang syne

For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne,

We'll take a cup o kindness yet, for auld lang syne."

An integral part of the Hogmanay partying, which continues very much today, is to welcome friends and strangers with warm hospitality and, of course, a kiss to wish everyone a Guid New Year. The underlying belief is to clear out the vestiges of the old year, have a clean break, and welcome in a young, new year on a

happy note.

"First footing," the first foot in the house after midnight, is still common in Scotland. To ensure good luck for the house, the first foot should be male, and dark haired, believed to be a throwback to the Viking days when blond strangers arriving on your doorstep meant trouble, and should bring symbolic coal, shortbread, salt, black bun and whisky. These days, however, whisky and perhaps shortbread are the only items still prevalent and available.

The magical firework display and torchlight procession in Edinburgh - and throughout many cities in Scotland - is reminiscent of the ancient custom at Scottish Hogmanay pagan parties hundreds of years ago.

The ancient festivities also included the lighting of bonfires, rolling blazing tar barrels down the hill and tossing torches. Animal hide was also wrapped around sticks and ignited which produced a smoke believed to be very effective to ward off evil spirits.

One of the most spectacular fire ceremonies takes place in Stonehaven, just south of Aberdeen on the North East coast. Giant fireballs, weighing up to 20 pounds, are lit and swung around on five feet long metal poles, requiring 60 men to carry them as they march up and down the High Street. The origin of the pre-Christian custom is believed to be linked to the Winter Solstice of late December with the fireballs signifying the power of the sun, to purify the world by consuming evil spirits.

So, although New Years Eve focus remains firmly on Scotland it is great to know this celebration has spread across the globe and major cities throughout the world host massive parties to welcome in the New Year.

I hope all this information helps you understand and enjoy Christmas and the New Year celebrations in the U.K. That just leaves me one final thing - to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2007.

Own the paper

This is your chance to directly impact the content and features of your base news. By completing a short survey, your answers will chart the course of future coverage. To participate in the Jet 48 readership survey please visit www.afnews.af.mil/internal/survey/suvey_index.htm.

Chapel worship schedule

Christmas Eve

Liturgical Service- 8 a.m.
Catholic Mass-9:30 a.m.
Evangelical Service-12:30 a.m.
Gospel Service-12:30 a.m.
Catholic children's Mass-4 p.m.
Protestant candlelight Service-7 p.m.
Catholic Mass-11 p.m.

Christmas Day

Catholic Mass- 9:30 a.m.

New Year's Eve

Liturgical Service-8 a.m.
Catholic Mass-9:30 a.m.
Evangelical Service-11 a.m.
Gospel Service-12:30 p.m.
Contemporary Service-4:30 p.m.
Watch night service followed by fellowship-10 p.m.

New Year's Day

Catholic Mass-11:30 a.m.

Hanukkah

All are invited to the RAF Lakenheath Chapel Hanukkah Celebration Dec. 21, at 5 p.m. A short fellowship will follow in the annex. For more information on the services provided over the holidays, call the chapel at 226-3711.

Worried about the weather?

For information on base and school weather delays or closure, call 226-3541 or off base (01638) 523 541 for RAF Lakenheath; and 238-3541 or off base (01638) 543 541 for RAF Mildenhall.



University of Phoenix

University of Phoenix offers two new Master's classes, Masters of Business Administration and Master of Arts in Education in Curriculum and Instruction. For more information call 226-3125.

AWAG Auslander Area Conference

The American Women's Activities in Germany's mission is to train, strengthen and connect volunteers, their organizations and communities. The Auslander area conference is Jan. 12 at the RAF Lakenheath Airmen and Family Readiness Center. Check-in begins at 8:15 a.m.; the conference is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Conference key note speaker is Mrs. Europe 2007, Wendy Sledd. The \$10 registration fee includes a light breakfast and lunch. For more information or to register contact Donna Balutski, AWAG Auslander area representative by e-mail at auslander@awag.us or dbalutski@btinternet.com or call 01842 814 490. All reservations required before Jan. 6; seating is limited.

Distance education registration

University of Maryland College Distance Education registration for term 3 runs through Jan 19. For more information call 226-3724.

Embry-Riddle '07 registration

Embry-Riddle is registering students for January graduate and undergraduate online courses. The deadline to register is today. For more information, call 226-2464 or 238-2916.

Central Texas special courses

Central Texas College offers courses in automotive mechanics, criminal justice, early childhood development and paralegal. For more information, call Fred Dinsmore at 226-3507.

TRICARE assistance

The 48th Medical Group TRICARE office has a beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator and debt collection assistance officer who gives assistance with TRICARE claims and benefits. The BCAC is an advocate to resolve customers TRICARE questions. The DCAO helps resolve medical or dental bill debt collection issues. For more information or to receive assistance, call 226-8694.

MOVIES

RAF Lakenheath 226-2139

Today

6:30 p.m. Open Season, PG, starring Paul Westerberg and Gary Sinise. A 900-pound domesticated grizzly bear named Boog and a scrawny, one-horned mule deer named Elliot end up stranded together in the woods during hunting season and it's up to the duo to rally all the other forest animals and turn the tables on the hunters.

9 p.m. School for Scoundrels, PG-13, starring Billy Bob Thornton and Jon Heder. Roger enrolls in a top-secret confidence-building class taught by the suavely underhanded Dr. P. Aided by his assistant, Leshar, Dr. P uses unorthodox, often dangerous methods, but he guarantees results: Employ his techniques and you will unleash your inner lion. Roger quickly discovers that star students have a way of catapulting Dr. P's competitive side into high gear.

Saturday

1 p.m. Open Season, PG,

3:30 p.m. Open Season, PG,

6:30 p.m. School for Scoundrels, PG-13, starring Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet. Iris is in love with a man who is about to marry another woman. Across the globe, Amanda realizes the man she lives with has been unfaithful. Two women who have never met and live 6000 miles apart, find themselves in the exact same place. They meet online at a home exchange website and impulsively switch homes for the holiday. Iris moves into Amanda's L.A. house in sunny California as Amanda arrives in the snow covered English countryside. Shortly after arriving at their destinations, both women find the last thing either wants or expects: a new romance.

Sunday

3 p.m. The Holiday, PG-13

6:30 p.m. The Holiday, PG-13

Monday

6:30 p.m. Blood Diamond, R starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Djimon Hounsou. Set against the backdrop of civil war and chaos in 1990's Sierra Leone, Danny Archer, a South African mercenary, and Solomon Vandy, a Mende fisherman are joined in a common quest to recover a rare pink diamond that can transform their lives. While in prison for smuggling, Archer learns that Solomon—who was taken from his family and forced to work in the diamond fields—has found and hidden the extraordinary rough stone.

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. School for Scoundrels, PG-13,

Wednesday

6:30 p.m. Blood Diamond, R

Thursday

6:30 p.m. The Guardian, PG-13

RAF Mildenhall 238-4955

Today

6:30 p.m. Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause, G, starring Tim Allen and Elizabeth Mitchell. It's Christmas time once again and Scott Calvin juggles a full house of family and the mischievous Jack Frost, who is trying to take over the "big guy's" holiday. At the risk of giving away the secret location of the North Pole, Scott invites his in-laws to share in the holiday festivities, and upcoming birth of baby Claus with expectant wife, Carol. Along for the adventure are Scott's extended family, son Charlie, ex-wife Laura Miller, her husband, Neil Miller and their daughter, Lucy who, together with head elf Curtis, foil Jack Frost's crafty scheme to control the North Pole.

9 p.m. Turistas, R

Saturday

3:30 p.m. Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause, G,

6:30 p.m. The Marine, PG-13

9 p.m. Turistas, R

Sunday

3:30 p.m. The Marine, PG-13,

6:30 p.m. Turistas, R

Monday

6:30 p.m. Employee of the Month, PG-13,

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Everyone's Hero, G,

Wednesday

6:30 p.m. Employee of the Month, PG-13,

Thursday

6:30 p.m. The Holiday, PG-13



Briefs

Commissary holiday hours

The RAF Lakenheath Commissary will close at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and is closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Professional development center

The RAF Lakenheath professional development center offers the following classes:

- Jan. 8 Mentoring 8 to 10 a.m.
- Jan. 9 EPR Writing 6 to 9 p.m.
- Jan. 10 Effective Writing 8 to 11 a.m.
- Jan. 11 Command Chief's Perspective 8 to 9 a.m.
- Jan. 16 Awards and Decorations 8 to 11 a.m.
- Jan. 17 Time Management 8 to 10 a.m.
- Jan. 18 Career Choices 8 to 9 a.m.

Martin Luther King luncheon

A Martin Luther King birthday celebration will be at 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Jan. 10 at Eagles' Landing. Col. Amanda W. Gladney, 48th Mission Support Group commander, will be the guest speaker. Lunch is \$12.95 for non-club members and \$10.95 for club members. For more information or to purchase tickets contact Jackie Charles at 226-8001 or Angela Robinson at 226-2468. At RAF Mildenhall contact, Master Sgt. Dwight Jones at 238-8862.

Babysitter's instructor course

A babysitter's instructor course offered by the American Red Cross, is 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday in the Airman and Family Readiness Center, RAF Lakenheath. Satisfactory completion of this course leads to Red Cross Instructor Certification for teaching the babysitting course. For more information or to sign-up, call the Red Cross at 226-1855.

Pharmacy price increase

The 48th Medical Group receives pricing direction for medications from the Defense Supply Center in Philadelphia. Resulting in medication prices rising an average of 150 percent. Prices are still based on governmental reduced pricing for specific medications and are below the retail prices stateside. Active duty, retirees and their dependents are not charged for these medications. The price of their medication is covered by appropriated funds and is not included in the price our pay patients are charged. Pay patients have the option of contacting their insurance carrier to see if they have a mail-in pharmacy to utilize. For a copy of prescription fees, visit the Medical Resource Management Office in the Hospital Annex, e-mail Airman 1st Class Robert Powers at robert.powers@lakenheath.af.mil or call (01638) 528 468.

Airman and Family
Readiness Center

(For more information call 226-3847)

Newcomers bus tour

A newcomers bus tour is Dec. 22 from 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The outing includes touring Bury St. Edmunds, its cathedral, a meal and shopping.

Pre-separation briefing

Pre-separation briefing will be held on Tuesday from 9 to 11 a.m. This class fulfills the mandatory requirement for all personnel retiring or separating from the military.

Lakenheath
Chapel
schedule

Catholic

Saturday Mass 5 p.m.
Sunday Mass 9:30 a.m.
Holy Day Mass 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Weekday Mass Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 11:30 a.m.
Reconciliation Saturdays 4 to 4:20 p.m. or by appointment.

Protestant

Liturgical Services 8 a.m.
Traditional Protestant Service 11 a.m.
Gospel Service 12:30 p.m.
Contemporary Service 4:30 p.m.
For more information about worship times or other chapel programs, call 226-3711.